

# A Serving of Hope

Volume 4 Issue 1

Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

January 2015

## Release CONTROL

*On action alone be thy interests,  
never on its fruits.*

~ Bhagavad Gita

Why am I still obsessed with weight?  
I'm abstaining, I'm trying to work the  
Steps, but I can't give up the scale. I'm  
terrified to stop the constant monitoring of  
my weight. What if I gain? How will I  
know if I don't weigh?

The problem is, I'm trying to work this  
program without giving up control. But is  
that possible? The first three Steps make it  
clear that those who wrote them, and the  
millions that followed, proved they could  
only recover by letting a Power outside  
themselves regulate their unmanageable  
lives.

If I say I have faith in a High Power, I can  
take the next step and turn my weight over  
to that Power. I can concentrate on taking  
the action — abstaining and working the  
steps — and leave the results to God.

**For today:** If I stop “supervising”  
my weight loss, it will be taken  
care of — in God's time. I pray for  
the willingness to do that.

~For Today, page 88

The views expressed in this  
newsletter are of the person who  
wrote them and do not represent  
OA as a whole. Take what you  
like and leave the rest. Oregon  
Intergroup serves meetings from  
Longview to Tillamook, Salem to  
Portland, Silverton to Hood River,  
and includes Vancouver and the  
surrounding area. Find us online  
at [oregon-oa.org](http://oregon-oa.org), or call (971)  
317-6343.

## We are Powerless, But we are not Helpless.

*"If you have embarked on this journey of self-reflection, you may be at a place that everyone, sooner or later, experiences on the spiritual path. After a while it seems like almost every moment of your life you're there, where you realize you have a choice. You have a choice whether to open or close, whether to hold on or let go, whether to harden or soften, whether to hold your seat or strike out. That choice is presented to you again and again and again."*

~Pema Chodron

I am always amazed by where I find our program. My journey of self-reflection began when I admitted I had a problem with food. When I was first in recovery, I felt like a victim of my disease. That I had no choice. It had complete power over me. But as I began to work the steps with a sponsor, I began to believe that I did have a choice. As I practiced choosing to follow a different path, I realized that every decision I make must reflect my choice to recover. With each choice I make, I am choosing either recovery or I am choosing my disease. Some may call this “black and white thinking,” but I have found it necessary when it comes to recovery from compulsive eating. My disease is cunning, baffling and powerful! I have learned the hard way that I cannot play around with my abstinence. I am either abstinent, or I am not.

This is a program of action. Each choice I make is an action I am taking to work my program. When I identify a behavior that is no longer serving me, I take action to learn a new way of living. Program tells us we need a new way of life; To act on life rather than reacting to it. In essence, a new way of living. What action can you take today to further your recovery?

~ Alice W.

## Upcoming Events

January 17, Sponsorship workshop, 9am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

January 23-25 2015, OA's 55th Birthday Party Celebration  
LAX Hilton, Los Angeles, Ca. See website: [oabirthday.com](http://oabirthday.com).

February 28, Mirror, Mirror... A Self-Acceptance Workshop,  
10am-4pm, Salem Hospital, Bldg. D, Creekside Room. Contact  
Christina [xabeth@comcast.net](mailto:xabeth@comcast.net) or Pat C 503-580-5738.

March 13-15, OIG Serenity Retreat, Twin Rocks Conference  
Center, 18705 Highway 101 North, Rockaway Beach, Oregon  
Email [serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org](mailto:serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org) or call Vee at 503-  
449-6005

Monthly Speakers Meeting on the 1st Saturday of each month  
from 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd.,  
Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

## Progress Report

When I first came into OA more than thirteen years ago, one of the first things my sponsor asked me to do was to write out a history of my weight gains and losses in order to get a clear picture of the nature of my disease. Now, after so many years in OA, I find it useful to review all the different ways I've tried to work this program.

Ay my first OA meeting, I was given a food plan. Abstinence was clearly defined as following this food plan without exception, and committing my food every day to a sponsor. It was very easy to know when I broke my abstinence: an extra lettuce leaf meant that I had to restart the abstinence count from zero. As lot of things depended on clean abstinence back then, such as the right to be a sponsor, which required twenty-one days of back-to-back abstinence.

It was all made very clear, but nonetheless I could never stay abstinent for more than twelve days in a row. Although learning that I had a disease and was not just weak-willed lightened my load, I still felt like a failure because I could never achieve long-term abstinence. Furthermore, I felt like a fraud because I never talked about my problems. In spite of it all, I gave service, including sponsoring. But, oh, how I struggled with abstinence.

The a new spirit entered OA. It became accepted that some members needed to work a spiritual program in order to become abstinent; that abstinence was a result of spiritual progress.

What an enormous relief! I worked very hard on the Steps, doing a thorough Fourth-Step inventory, and I really tackled my character defects. I wasn't gaining any weight; in fact, I was a little bit thinner. More importantly, I no longer felt guilt nor dishonesty. This was liberating.

I'm grateful for this period in my OA life because it succeeded in eliminating the guilt I was still carrying about my compulsive overeating. But even then, long-term abstinence did not appear. Furthermore, I stopped dealing with the food altogether. I no longer worried about what I was eating or how. I did more than give up the scale and the measuring cup — I gave up abstinence as a goal.

During this period of time I was diagnosed as an active diabetic who had to stay on a very careful diet in order to prevent long-term complications. The dietitian gave me a food plan to follow, but I didn't; I just couldn't somehow, perhaps because I didn't have the tools to handle food restrictions as a goal. Or perhaps I believed that it would be alright if I just worked my program, came to meetings, did service, and turned my problem over to my Higher Power.

*~Continued on page 3*

## Calling All Meetings: Is Your Voice Being Heard?

Do you want to strengthen OA in your area and throughout Oregon? Make sure your voice is heard in full force by sending an Intergroup Rep to your monthly Oregon Intergroup meeting. Give your members an opportunity to serve and help all of us benefit from a strong and diverse OA organization. Oregon Intergroup meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Girls Scouts building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219.

---

### I CHOOSE...

To live by choice, not by chance.

To make changes, not excuses.

To be motivated, not manipulated.

To be useful, not used.

To excel, not complete.

I choose self-esteem, not self-pity.

I choose to listen to my inner voice,  
not the random opinion of others.

~ Miranda Marrott

## Young People's

### Phone List

Oregon Intergroup is assembling a contact list for young people in OA. If you came into program at age 30 or younger and would like to offer your experience, strength and hope to a young person in our program, please send your contact information to [youngpeople@oregon- oa.org](mailto:youngpeople@oregon- oa.org). Include your name, phone number, email address and the age you were when you came into OA. WSO defines a young person as someone who is 30 years or younger. If you came into program when you were older than 30 years old and would also like to be a resource to the younger members of our fellowship, you are also welcome to add your name to the phone list.

## Give It Time

It's important to me to take the time to sit back and open myself to what would best link me with my Higher Power. Sometimes it's a prayer-book reading. Sometimes I just sit and let images emerge. Other times a word or phrase pops up for me to explore in my journal. Sometimes I need to read a Step or Tradition.

But I have to give it time. When I first started scheduling time for morning prayer and meditation, I was amazed at the serenity I received. I began to realize that this HP had real power in my life. This morning meditation helps me shed the compulsive and worried that arise as I anticipate my day. Over time, I was better able to let God's guidance and power flow through me throughout the entire day. It is like having a strategy and pep talk from a supportive coach who believes in me.

I must admit, though, that I also have days when it's almost impossible just to sit and be open. My instinct tells me to flee. But I know better things await me if I stay.

The discipline of regular prayer and meditation is vital for my daily health. I've learned techniques from many sources. One author saw herself as a simple wooden flute, hollowed out and full of holes. By emptying herself and becoming receptive to the breath of God, she would sing God's song throughout her day.

I gain purpose and direction from the analogy of serving as an instrument of God's song.

Since I began my recovery, I see that the challenge is to let go of control. When I want to be in charge, or feel I have to be, my throat tightens up and the whole song is forced and choppy. This is why I need to surrender control to my Higher Power every day. I want my prayer and meditation to be a time to invite God's melody to sing through me.

*~Seeking the Spiritual Path, page 77*

---

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to [newsletter@oregon-oa.com](mailto:newsletter@oregon-oa.com)

---

## Got CDs?

Our Intergroup CD library could use your help! A lot of our CDs have been checked out for a long time. We all need a chance to hear the experience, strength and hope found in our CD library.

If you have a CD from our library, please return it so others can strengthen their recovery. You can return a CD by either giving it to your IG Rep or mailing it to the PO Box on the front of the CD package.

Thanks so much for your help. For questions, contact Jenice at 503-705-5599.

## Progress Report (continued from page 2)

Two years ago my diabetes worsened, and the dreaded complications became evident. My way may have given me emotional and spiritual progress, but my eating habits were killing me. I didn't know what to do.

Finally, I confided in a close OA friend, a nurse, and said I needed help. The experts she sent me to all said that I had to change my eating habits. I really tried, but still I felt it would all work out if I just went to a lot of meetings and did a lot of service.

Nothing much changed. My life was out of control, my food was out of control, and I was slowly killing myself - all the while going to five meetings a week and working my program as hard as I could.

Five months ago, I had a spiritual awakening of the kind I'd always dreamed about. Sitting in my room, feeling that I had to choose between life and death (and an ugly death at that), I chose life.

The meaning of that decision became immediately apparent. It meant I had to declare complete bankruptcy and to surrender totally. Surrender clearly meant doing anything and everything I was told to do by my doctor, my dietitian, my sponsor, and the OA literature - everything, without selection, and without exception.

The dietitian told me what to eat and how often, and to follow that plan exactly. It is my abstinence, and it is the most important thing in my life without exception. My doctor tells me what to do and I do it, without complaining. The program tells me that I must be honest and not hide anything, even the smallest issue, and so I am doing that.

For the first time in more than thirteen years in OA, I am experiencing long-term continuous abstinence. For the most part, the compulsion to overeat has been lifted, and for this I am very grateful.

It is not because I am a diabetic that I can be abstinent - I couldn't be abstinent for years in spite of the fact that I knew what the diabetes was doing to me. I am abstinent today because I have a program that gives priority to abstinence. I take care of the food and the rest just happens.

My program is not the same one I worked thirteen years ago. Now I know the spiritual and emotional growth I've experienced in OA is part of the entire recovery process. And now there's no guilt associated with less than one 100 percent perfect adherence to a food plan — I just keep trying to make progress.

*~Israel, Abstinence, 2nd Edition, page 157*

## An Incredible Feeling

Complete surrender is the key.

After three years in Overeaters Anonymous, I really thought I had done the Steps pretty well, especially the first three. I was convinced I was powerless over food; I knew I believed in a Power greater than myself; and I really thought I had come a long way in turning my life over to a God I can trust.

So why have I spent these last three years slipping and sliding with absolutely no long-term abstinence, perfect or imperfect? Why do I still find myself eating my old binge foods in spite of what I know and what I want?

My life is immeasurably better, no doubt. I've been a "normal" size for the past three years. I came out of a relapse last year with a gain of only a few pounds - a miracle for someone who can put on five or ten pounds in a weekend. So why couldn't I put the food down for more than a few weeks at a time? Why was I so obsessed with what, when, how much, and where I was going to eat? I made lists of what I was willing to do on a daily basis, and even though the lists included a willingness to avoid my binge foods, I would decide I could handle just one or make up some other excuse.

Last week something happened, and a new process began. I was talking about Step One with a sponsee, referring her to the pamphlet, "A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor," and I read the line: "If he (or she) clings to the lurking notions that there may be an easier way than

OA, or that a little controlled overeating is possible, he (or she) will find continuous abstinence unattainable." That was me. My attitude always came down to "I'll get away with it."

I spent my next morning's two-hour train ride writing. As I wrote, I got angry and very upset. What was coming out was my long-held belief that food was my great equalizer, my entry into society, the thing that made me like everyone else. It had been my only friend when I was young, since I couldn't relate to most of the people in my junior high school. My best buddy was the girl I snuck out of school with to buy desserts at a local bakery, disobeying my parents and using stolen money.

My writing started slowing down as I realized that I was using food so I didn't have to be different from other people. I could fit in. I could be "normal." My error and dread of being different, of not being accepted or approved of, was being taken care of by food.

Yet I knew food wasn't my friend. I knew that it wasn't bringing me closer to people, but was separating me, making me more isolated and different. I may have thought that it was food that helped me survive a hellishly lonely childhood, but it was destroying me in the process. I don't know how I survived my youth, but at this point in my life, food was poison.

My sponsor listened to my writing and suggested that I was very

normal - like countless other compulsive overeaters who pursued this course of thought and action into untold misery.

This is the insanity of the disease. He suggested that perhaps there was nothing I could do to get rid of my insane dread except to turn the problem over to God.

My attitude began to shift. That night I sat down and wrote a short note to God, turning my food, my compulsion, and my insanity over to God's care.

The next morning I woke up with the strangest feeling. I knew with a certainty that all of my binge foods could be put in front of me, and I would have the power to choose not to eat them. What an incredible feeling.

All I had done was accept the fact that I am powerless over food. I cannot control it in any sense of the word, and to try to, with lists or willpower, was futile. I was willing to put the food down and accept the gift of abstinence and all that comes with it.

What came with it was God. A Higher Power. And I believe that Higher Power wants me to be sane. All I have to do is take twelve simple Steps that help me change my attitude about my entire life.

For the first time, I am reacting normally to food. I turned my life over to God, and God is giving me the power to live without my particular brand of poison. And I believe that that God of my understanding will be there with me every day to give me the strength and the power of choice.

~ Connecticut, (edited)  
A New Beginning, page 19